CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

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EDITED BY

AYLETT RAINS.

Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.—JUDE.

Internal marks of truth, and honesty, to be found in the New Testament.

BY THOMAS CHALMERS.

[Continued from page 47.]

The argument derives great additional strength, from viewing the New Testament, not as one single performance, but as a collection of several performances. It is the work of no less than eight different authors, who wrote without any appearance of concert, who published in different parts of the world, and whose writings possess every evidence, both internal and external, of being independent productions. Had only one author exhibited the same minute accuracy of allusion, it would have been esteemed a very strong evidence of his antiquity. But when we see so many authors, exhibiting such a well sustained and almost unexcepted accuracy, through the whole of their varied and distinct narratives, it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion, that they were either the eyewitnesses of their own history, or lived about the period of its accomplishment.

When different historians undertake the affairs of the same period, they either derive their information from one another, or proceed upon distinct and independent information of their own. Now, it is not difficnlt to distinguish the copyist from the original historian. There is some-

thing in the very style and manner of an original narrative, which announces its pretensions. It is not possible that any one event, or any series of events, should make such a similar impression upon two witnesses, or dispose them to relate it in the same order, to form the same estimate, as to the circumstances which should be noticed as important, and those other circumstances which should be suppressed as immaterial. Each witness tells the thing in his own way, makes use of his own language, and brings forward circumstances, which the other might omit altogether, as not essential to the purpose of his narrative. It is this agreement in the facts, with this variety in the manner of describing them, that never fails to impress upon the enquirer that additional conviction, which arises from the concurrence of separate and independent testimonies. Now this is precisely that kind of coincidence, which subsists betwixt the New Testament writers and Josephus, in their allusions to the peculiar customs and institutions of that age. Each party maintains the style of original and independent historians. The one often omits altogether, or makes only a slight and distant allusion to what occupies a prominent part in the composition of the other. There is not the slightest vestige of any thing like a studied coincidence betwixt them. There is variety, but no opposition; and it says much for the authenticity of both histories, that the most scrupulous and attentive criticism, can scarcely detect a single example of an apparent contradiction in the testimony of these different authors, which does not admit of a likely, or at least a plausible, reconciliation.

When the difference betwixt two historians is carried to the length of a contradiction, it enfeebles the credit of both their testimonies. When the agreement is carried to the length of a close and scrupulous resemblance in every particular, it destroys the credit of one of the parties as an independent historian. In the case before us, we neither perceive this difference, nor this agreement. Such are the variations, that, at first sight, the reader is alarmed with the appearance of very serious and embarrassing difficulties. And such is the actual coincidence, that the difficulties vanish, when we apply to them the labors of a profound and intelligent criticism. Had it been the object of the

gospel writers to trick out a plausible imposition on the credulity of the world, they would have studied a closer resemblance to the existing authorities of that period; nor would they have laid themselves open to the superficial brilliancy of Voltaire, which dazzles every imagination, and reposed their vindication with the Lelands and Lardners of a distant posterity, whose sober erudition is so little attended to, and which so few know how to appreciate.

In the gospel, we are told that Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, married his brother Phillip's wife. In Josephus, we have the same story; only he gives a different name to Phillip, and calls him Herod; and what adds to the difficulty, there was a Phillip of that family, whom we knew not to have been the first husband of Herodias. This is at first sight a little alarming. But, in the progress of our enquiries, we are given to understand from this same Josephus, that there were three Herods in the same family; and therefore, no improbability in there being two Phillips. We also know from the histories of that period, that it was quite common for the same individual to have two names; and this is never more necessary, than when employed to distinguish brothers who have one name the same. The Herod who is called Phillip, is just as likely a distinction, as the Simon who is called Peter, or the Saul who is called Paul. The name of the high-priest, at the time of our Saviour's crucifixion, was Caiaphas, according to the evangelists. According to Josephus, the name of the high-priest at that period was Joseph. This would have been precisely a difficulty of the same kind, had not Josephus happened to mention, that this Joseph was also called Caiaphas. Would it have been dealing fairly with the evangelists, we ask, to have made their credibility depend upon the accidental omission of another historian? Is it consistent with any acknowledged principle of sound criticism, to bring four writers so entirely under the tribunal of Josephus, each of whom stands as firmly supported by all the evidences which can give authority to an historian, and have greatly the advantage of him in this, that they can add the argument of their concurrence to the argument of each separate and independent testimony? It so happens however, in the present instance, that even Jewish writers,

in their narrative of the same circumstance, give the name of Phillip to the first husband of Herodias. We by no means conceive, that any foreign testimony was necessary for the vindication of the evangelists. Still, however, it must go far to dissipate every suspicion of artifice in the construction of their histories. It proved, that, in the confidence with which they delivered themselves up to their own information, they neglected appearance, and felt themselves independent of it. This apparent difficulty, like many others of the same kind, lands us in a stronger confirmation of the honesty of the evangelists; and it is delightful to perceive, how truth receives a fuller accession to its splendor, from the attempts which are made to disgrace and to darken it.

On this branch of the argument, the impartial inquirer must be struck with the little indulgence which infidels, and even christians, have given to the evangelical writers. In other cases, when we compare the narratives of cotemporary historians, it is not expected, that all the circumstances alluded to by one will be taken notice of by the rest; and it often happens, that an event or a custom is admitted upon the faith of a single historian; and the silence of all other writers is not suffered to attach suspicion or discredit to his testimony. It is an allowed principle, that a scrupulous resemblance betwixt two histories is very far from necessary to their being held consistent with one another. And what is more, it sometimes happens, that with cotemporary historians, there may be an apparent contradiction, and the credit of both parties remain as entire and unsuspicious as before. Posterity is in these cases disposed to make the most liberal allowances. Instead of calling it a contradiction, they often call it a difficulty. They are sensible, that, in many instances, a seeming variety of statements has, upon a more extensive knowledge of ancient history, admitted of a perfect reconciliation. Instead, then, of referring the difficulty in question to the inaccuracy or bad faith of any of the parties, they, with more justness and more modesty, refer it to their own ignorance, and to that obscurity which necessarily hangs over the history of every remote age. These principles are suffered to have great influence in every similar investigation,

every ordinary principle is abandoned, and the suspicion annexed to the teachers of religion is carried to the dereliction of all that candor and liberality with which every other document of antiquity is judged of and appreciated. How does it happen, that the authority of Josephus should be acquiesced in as a first principle, while every step, in the narrative of the evangelists, must have foreign testimony to confirm and support it? How comes it, that the silence of Josephus should be construed into an impeachment of the testimony of the evangelists, while it is never admitted for a single moment, that the silence of the evangelists can impart the slightest blemish to the testimony of Josephus? How comes it, that the supposition of two Phillips in one family should throw a damp of scepticism over the gospel narrative, while the only circumstance which renders that supposition necessary is the single testimony of Josephus; in which very testimony it is necessarily implied, that there are two Herods in that same family? How comes it, that the evangelists, with as much internal, and a vast deal more of external evidence in their favor, should be made to stand before Josephus, like so many prisoners at the bar of justice? In any other case, we are convinced, that this would be looked upon as *rough handling*. But we are not sorry for it. It has given more triumph and confidence to the argument. And it is no small addition to our faith, that its first teachers have survived an examination, which, in point of rigor and severity, we believe to be quite unexampled in the annals of criticism.

It is always looked upon as a favorable presumption, when a story is told circumstantially. The art and safety of an impostor is to confine his narrative to generals, and not to commit himself by too minute a specification of time and place, and allusion to the manners or occurrences of the day. The more of circumstances that we introduce into a story, we multiply the chances of detection, if false; and therefore, where a great deal of circumstance is introduced, it proves, that the narrator feels the confidence of truth, and labors under no apprehension for the fate of his narrative. Even though we have it not in our power to verify the truth of a single circumstance, yet the mere property of a story being circumstantial is always felt to carry

an evidence in its favor It imparts a more familiar air of life and reality to the narrative. It is easy to believe, that the groundwork of a story may be a fabrication; but it requires a more refined species of imposture than we can well conceive, to construct a harmonious and well sustained narrative, abounding in minute and circumstantial details which support one another, and where, with all our experience of real life, we can detect nothing misplaced, or inconsistent, or improbable.

To prosecute this argument in all its extent, it would be necessary to present the reader with a complete analysis or examination of the gospel history. But the most superficial observer cannot fail to perceive, that it maintains, in a very high degree, the character of being a circumstantial narrative. When a miracle is recorded, we have generally the name of the town or neighborhood where it happened; the names of the people concerned; the effect upon the hearts, and convictions of the byestanders; the arguments and examinations it gave birth to; and all that minuteness of reference and description which impresses a strong character of reality upon the whole history. If we take along with us the time at which this history made its appearance, the argument becomes much stronger. It does not merely carry a presumption in its favor, from being a circumstantial history: it carries a proof in its favor, because these circumstances were completely within the reach and examination of those to whom it was addressed. Had the evangelits been false historians, they would not have committed themselves upon so many particulars. They would not have furnished the vigilant inquirers of that period with such an effectual instrument for bringing them into discredit with the people: nor foolishly supplied, in every page of their narrative, so many materials for a cross-examination, which would infallibly have disgraced them.

Now, we of this age can institute the same cross-examination. We can compare the evangelical writers with cotemporary authors, and verify a number of circumstances in the history, and government, and peculiar economy of the Jewish people. We therefore have it in our power to institute a cross-examination upon the writers of the New Testament; and the freedom and frequency of their allu-

sions to these circumstances supply us with ample materials for it. The fact, that they are borne out in their minute and incidental allusions by the testimony of other historians, gives a strong weight of what has been called circumstantial evidence in their favor. As a specimen of the argument, let us confine our observations to the history of our Saviour's trial, and execution and burial. They brought him to Pontius Pilate. We know both from Tacitus and Josephus, that he was at that time governor of Judea. A sentence from him was necessary, before they could proceed to the execution of Jesus; and we know that the power of life and death was usually vested in the Roman governor. Our Saviour was treated with derision; and this we know to have been a customary practice at that time, previous to the execution of criminals, and during the time of it. Pilate scourged Jesus, before he gave him up to be crucified. We know from ancient authors, that this was a very usual practice among the Romans. The account of an execution generally run in this form:—He was stripped, whipped, and beheaded or executed. According to the evangelists, his accusation was written on the top of the cross; and we learn from Suetonius and others, that the crime of the person to be executed was affixed to the instrument of his punishment. According to the evangelists, this accusation was written in three different languages; and we know from Josephus, that it was quite common in Jerusalem to have all public advertisements written in this manner. According to the evangelists, Jesus had to bear his cross; and we know from other sources of information, that this was the constant practice of these times. According to the evangelists, the body of Jesus was given up to be buried at the request of friends. We know that, unless the criminal was infamous, this was the law, or the custom with all Roman governors.

These, and a few more particulars of the same kind, occur within the compass of a single page of the evangelical history. The circumstantial manner of the history affords a presumption in its favor, antecedent to all examination into the truth of the circumstances themselves. But it makes a strong addition to the evidence, when we find, that in all the subordinate parts of the main story, the

evangelists maintain so great a consistency, with the testimony of other authors, and with all that we can collect from other sources of information, as to the manners and institutions of that period. It is difficult to conceive, in the first instance, how the inventor of a fabricated story would hazard such a number of circumstances, each of them supplying a point of comparison with other authors, and giving to the inquirer an additional chance of detecting the imposition. And it is still more difficult to believe, that truth should have been so artfully blended with falsehood in the composition of this narrative, particularly as we perceive nothing like a forced introduction of any one circumstance. There appears to be nothing out of place, nothing thrust in with the view of imparting an air of probability to the history. The circumstance upon which we bring the evangelists into comparison with profane authors, is often not intimated in a direct form, but in the form of a slight or distant allusion. There is not the most remote appearance of its being fetched or sought for. It is brought in accidentally, and flows in the most natural and undesigned manner out of the progress of the narrative.

The circumstance, that none of the gospel writers are inconsistent with one another, falls better under a different branch of the argument. It is enough for our present purpose, that there is no single writer inconsistent with himself. It often happens, that falsehood carries its own refutation along with it; and that, through the artful disguises which are employed in the construction of a fabricated story, we can often detect a flaw or a contradiction, which condemns the authority of the whole narrative. Now, every single piece of the New Testament wants this mark or character of falsehood. The different parts are found to sustain, and harmonise, and flow out of each other. Each has at least the merit of being a consistent narrative. For any thing we see upon the face of it, it may be true, and a further hearing must be given before we can be justified in rejecting it as the tale of an impostor.

There is another mark of falsehood, which each of the gospel narratives appears to be exempt from. There is little or no parading about their own country. We can collect their pretensions to credit from the history itself,

but we see no anxious display of these pretensions. We cannot fail to perceive the force of that argument, which is derived from the publicity of the Christian miracles, and the very minute and scrupulous examination which they had to sustain, from the rulers and official men of Judea.—But this publicity, and these examinations, are simply recorded by the evangelists. There is no boastful reference to these circumstances, and no ostentatious display of the advantage which they give to the Christian argument.—They bring their story forward in the shape of a direct and unencumbered narrative, and deliver themselves with that simplicity and unembarrassed confidence, which nothing but their consciousness of truth and the perfect feeling of their own strength and consistency can account for. They do not write, as if their object was to carry a point that was at all doubtful or suspicious. It is simply to transmit to the men of other times, and of other countries, a memorial of the events which led to the establishment of the Christian religion in the world. In the prosecution of their narrative, we challenge the most refined judge of the human character to point out a single symptom of diffidence, in the truth of their own story, or of art to cloak this diffidence from the notice of the most severe and vigilant observers. The manner of the New Testament writers does not carry in it the slightest idea of its being a put on manner. It is quite natural, quite unguarded, and free of all apprehensions that their story is to meet with any discredit or contradiction from any of those numerous readers, who had it fully in their power to verify or to expose it. We see no expedient made use of to obtain or to conciliate the acquiescence of their readers. They appear to feel as if they did not need it. They deliver what they have to say in a round and unvarnished manner; nor is it in general accompanied with any of those strong asseverations, by which an imposter so often attempts to practice upon the credulity of his victims.

In the simple narrative of the evangelists, they betray no feeling of wonder at the extraordinary nature of the events which they record, and no consciousness that what they are announcing is to excite any wonder among their readers. This appears to us to be a very strong circumstance. Had

it been the newly broached tale of an imposter, he would, in all likelihood, have feigned astonishment himself, or at least have laid his account with the doubt and astonishment of those to whom it was addressed. When a person tells a wonderful story to a company who are totally unacquainted with it, he must be sensible, not merely of the surprise which is excited in the minds of the hearers, but of a corresponding sympathy in his own mind with the feelings of those who listen to him. He lays his account with the wonder, if not the incredulity, of his hearers; and this distinctly appears in the terms with which he delivers his story, and the manner in which he introduces it. It makes a wide difference, if on the other hand, he tells the same story to a company, who have long been apprised of the chief circumstances, but who listen to him for the mere purpose of obtaining a more distinct and particular narrative. Now, in as far as we can recollect from the manner of the evangelists, they stand in this last predicament. They do not write, as if they were imposing a novelty upon their readers. In the language of Luke, they write for the sake of giving more distinct information; and that the readers *might know the certainty of those things, wherein they had been instructed.* In the prosecution of this task, they delivered themselves with the most familiar and unembarrassed simplicity. They do not appear to anticipate the surprise of their readers, or to be at all aware, that the marvelous nature of their story is to be an obstacle to its credit or reception in the neighborhood. At the first performance of our Saviour's miracles, there was a strong and a widely spread sensation over the whole country. *His fame went abroad*, and *all people were amazed.* This is quite natural; and the circumstance of no surprise being either felt or anticipated by the evangelists, in the writing of their history, can best be accounted for by the truth of the history itself, that the experience of years had blunted the edge of novelty, and rendered miracles familiar, not only to them, but to all the people to whom they addressed themselves.

What appears to us a most striking internal evidence for the truth of the gospel, is that perfect unity of mind and of purpose which is ascribed to our Saviour. Had he been

an imposter, he could not have foreseen all the fluctuations of his history; and yet no expression of surprise is recorded to have escaped from him. No event appears to have caught him unprepared. We see no shifting of doctrine or sentiment, with a view to accommodate to new or unexpected circumstances. His parables and warnings to his disciples, give sufficient intimation, that he laid his account with all those events, which appeared to his unenlightened friends to be so untoward, and so unpromising. In every explanation of his objects, we see the perfect consistency of a mind, before whose prophetic eye all futurity lay open; and when the events of this futurity came round, he met them, not as chances that were unforseen, but as certainties which he had provided for. This consistency of his views is supported through all the variations of his history, and it stands finally contrasted in the record of the evangelists, with the misconceptions, the surprises, the disappointments of his followers. The gradual progress of their minds from the splendid anticipations of earthly grandeur, to a full acquiescence in the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, throws a stronger light on the perfect unity of purpose and of conception which animates his, and which can only be accounted for by the inspiration that filled and enlivened it. It may have been possible enough to describe a self-sustained example of this contrast from an actual history before us. It is difficult, however, to conceive, how it could be sustained so well, and in a manner so apparently artless, by means of invention, and particularly when the inventors made their own errors and their own ignorance form part of the fabrication.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

ESSAY ON THE PROSPECTS OF IMMORTALITY.

No. II.

In our last number, we considered man as a being of superior physical, and mental organization, destined to fill some illustrious sphere, of intellectual felicity, purity, and utility; and hence we accounted for the marked and assiduous attentions of the Divine Being to the progenitors,

of our race, for the improvement and consequent happiness of our species. We now proceed, as was proposed, to speak of the capacity of man, for the enjoyment of happiness by anticipation.

So necessary is hope, to the present happiness of man, that it is not only "an anchor to his soul," in so far as religion, and eternal happiness interests his mind, but it is interwoven with all his common concerns, and sweetens all the "*bitter ills*," of life's uneven and variegated journey. On this ocean of time, we see men as mariners ever on the look out, in *tip toe* expectation of meeting the objects of their prospective desires, and of embracing the causes of their ever rising anticipations. No matter how frail may be the bark in which they sail, nor how boisterous the ocean on the waves of which they may be tossed, future objects, and future good still quicken them to action, and give zest to all their enjoyments.

"Hope springs eternal in the human breast,"
And every soul that hopes, by hope is bless'd.

Man's main object in all he does, is happiness, and he values no object, only as he sees, or thinks he sees, in it, a suitableness to fill his desires, and to subserve this main object of all his pursuits; and in just such proportion as he sees in any object a suitableness to this end, is such object, the object of his ardent pursuit, and joyful anticipation.

Hence it is that we see the world full of life and business. On every side, the constant *buzz* of swarming anticipants is heard. Never was bee nor butterfly more intent in seeking its favorite flowers, than is man in attaining the objects of his desire. "Who will show us any good?" is the subject of his perpetual solicitude and inquiry. Hope like an eternal spring presses him onward through all the meanderings of his sublunary journey, in quest of objects, such as he conceives will subserve the main object of all his pursuits, his happiness. For the attainment of this object, he tills the stubborn earth, or ploughs the angry billows of the distant ocean!—Under the burning sun of the torrid zone, and amidst the eternal snows and ice of

Lapland, we see him, still, steady to his purpose. He faces the storm, breasts the battle, does penance, immolates himself to the Gods, or drowns in the waters of the Ganges for the attainment of this object! In short, hope is the spring of every human action. It is the ever living, never tiring friend of the rich and the poor, the wise and the ignorant, the noble and the ignoble, the king and the beggar.

No sooner does man embrace the object of his fond anticipation, than another, and perhaps a more pleasing object, presents itself to his view. The scholar, the husbandman, the merchant, and the mechanic, each in his proper line, fly from object to object, like the humming bird from flower to flower, and continually soar to higher objects, as successful pursuit enlarges their expectations. Like children in pursuit of butterflies, we see them grasping on every side at the objects of their desire, and, although instead of a butterfly, they often grasp a wasp, yet before the smart of the envenomed sting departs from their flesh, we see them rushing forward with joy-sparkling countenances, elated by the anticipation of another object!

When a young man, destitute of property, commences business, he thinks a handsome cottage, fertile farm, and loving wife would make him happy. He labors hard, and behaves circumspectly until his circumstances are so far improved as to present him with fair prospects of obtaining these objects of his wishes. As he draws nearer the participation of these objects, the lamp of joy is replenished with additional oil, and burns with a brighter lustre. No person will say that the anticipation of objects such as these, is not calculated to inspire with joy the warm heart of this expectant. Well, he attains this summit at which he aimed! Is he happy? Yes: But his happiness does not consist exclusively in the objects of his attainment. His mind now grasps with mighty exertion at other objects which arise with all their witchery of irresistible attraction just before him, on the pathway of life, and he is again delighted and enamoured with the fascinating beauties of the rising prospect. Could every prospect be veiled, so that hope could find nothing on which to rest, he would languish and die, surrounded with those very objects, the anticipation of which, for a time, filled him with such exquisite delight!

Now from all that has been said, it will follow, that man is pre-eminently capacitated for the enjoyment of happiness by anticipation; and that his present happiness, in so far as this happiness is the result of anticipation, will always be proportionate to the desire which we have toward the anticipated object, and the probability of obtaining it. This, I think, cannot be denied by any student of human nature; and if this be admitted, it must also be admitted that those whose future prospects are the brightest, enjoy the largest quantity of present happiness; and consequently, that those who have prospects of immortal happiness in view, are the happiest of men, for this very *plain reason*, they have the *brightest* of all *prospects*.

Where is an earthly good, which we might venture to put in competition with immortality? Compared with it,

> "Crowns become as childish toys,
> And gold as sordid dust."

By the light of it, eternity blazes with ineffable glories, and shines into the heart of the joyful expectant, with the mild and renovating radiance of never changing truth! "Time," says the Christian, "is short;" "life is a vapor, which continues for a little time, and then vanishes away!" But eternity will never end! There Christ has prepared for me, and for all his friends "a mansion," "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." There I shall meet with all the Christians, and with all the good of every nation. There I shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Paul, Peter, and John, and all those noble and illustrious spirits which once shone with unrivalled lustre, as stars of the first magnitude in the church of God; and through a long, long eternity, enjoy with them the pleasures of the most refined and exalted intercourse. Were mountains of gold, and silver, and precious stones put in competition with this hope, I would call them all

> *"Trifles, light as air,"*
> *And as the dust, contemptible.*

This hope imparts a grace and sweetness to all the enjoyments, and to all the calamities of life, which without

it, they could not possess. Hence, if the Christian "uses this world as not abusing it," it is because he knows that "the fashion of this world, will shortly pass away." If he is delighted with the prospect of earthly *good*, it is because that he knows that if all earthly *goods* fail him, there is a *heavenly good*, which will never fail. If with mourning neighbors he follows to the dark tomb his deceased relatives, or friends, he anticipates the effulgence of the resurrection morn, when they will be resuscitated and come forth to glory and everlasting life. If his frail bark, in which he navigates the ocean of life, is much shattered by the storms of many winters, and is ready to sink, he fears not the loss of it. As long as he sails by faith, it is insured; and though it may be wrecked on the first rock, or foundered in the first storm, he has the assurance that his "loss will be his gain." He can say at all times, "for me to live is Christ, to die is gain." In short, such is the efficacy of this hope, that it enables its possessor "to do all things with joy," and to the "glory of God," giving thanks to the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

But remove from the soul of man the hope of immortality, and what is he? what is the world in which he dwells, but a dark and joyless Golgotha? Without this hope, the magnificence and splendor of the universe would be veiled by the sable curtain of despair, and cruel suspense would shroud all his prospects, and destroy all the better feelings of his heart. In this case, his capacity for the enjoyment of happiness by anticipation, could do him no good; because, if he should look forward into the world of *possibilities* and *probabilities*, in search of objects calculated to delight him, the *grim spectre* would be the tallest *probability* in the whole group of *probabilities*, and like the *Bohon Upas*, would originate an effluvia so deleterious in its nature and effects, as would sicken the heart, and kill the enjoyment of every thinking being who should venture to drink the fountain of futurity, or breathe the atmosphere in which aspiring hope bids the longing mind to seek refreshment!

Why was man created, or rather why was he created a man, if there be no future happy state? Would not a mule, a beaver, or an elephant have answered the ends of a tem-

porary existence, as well as a being whose mental powers enable him to soar beyond the sun, and to outstrip the comets in their flight? If a brute's destiny be mine, why was not I a brute? Had I been a worm, I could have crawled into the dust forgetful of the miseries of sensitive nature, or if to be an ox had been my lot, I would have *browsed* under the shady tree, unmolested by the affairs of yesterdays or tomorrows. Brutes possess not my retentiveness of memory; they cannot, therefore, sigh through mournful reminiscence of past deathbed scenes, concerning

"*Their kindred dead.*"

But I sicken when I contemplate the irrational and brutalizing speculations of those who would rob us of our hope. "They are men of corrupt minds—reprobates concerning the faith."

Go proud infidels, go to the house of mourning, if you would prove the moral excellency of your boasted attainments! Tell those weeping affectionate parents, that their deceased son will never live again! Tell them that death is an endless sleep, and that all the noble powers and amiable qualities of him in whom their hearts were bound up, are now mouldered to dust! Go to the bedside of the languishing Christian, and impart your consolations, if you have any, to him. Tell him that in a few short moments, he must be in death's icy arms, and in the dark dungeon of the dead; the doors of which will never open, nor admit one glimmering ray of joyful light! Tell him that he will never see his wife, nor his children, nor his friends any more! Tell him that the same universal ruin awaits all that is mortal! Then ridicule the New Testament doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and if these fundamental *articles of your creed* do not enable him to shout victory over death and the grave, upbraid him with the weakness of human nature, and tell him that he ought to bear his calamities like a philosopher! Like a philosopher, did I say? Alas! philosophy fails, even its philosophical votaries in the last agonizing struggles of dissolving nature. "O death! death!" said Aristotle, the prince of philosophers, "thou terrible thing! of all things thou art the most terrible!" Philosophy imparts no consolations to dying mortals!—

it may strew your pillows with thorns, but it can never enable you to triumph over death! But

"Jesus can make a dying bed,
Feel soft as downy pillows are;
While on his breast we lean our head,
And breathe our life out sweetly there!"

We must now conclude this number by observing, that even if infidelity be true, and we make the best of it we can, still, the utmost dint of human ingenuity, can never cause it to be productive of any permanent good. While on the other hand, if christianity be a delusion, it is a glorious delusion; enabling its adherents to live, while they do live, rich in hope, and in every thing else calculated to render them virtuous and happy. I have, therefore, arrived from the whole premises before me, at this conclusion; to hope through life for the glories of immortality, knowing that it will be time enough to lose this hope, when the realities of death shall prove the dark and comfortless predictions of infidels to be true. As to infidels, they may enjoy the glories of eternal midnight, in the best way practicable. I think I shall never envy them any happiness which their God may impart to them.

In our next number, we will show that the hope of immortality is necessary, to the moral and mental improvement of our species.—EDITOR.

AFFECTION FOR THE DEAD.

By Washington Irving.

The sorrow for the dead is the only sorrow from which we refuse to be divorced. Every other wound we seek to heal—every other affliction to forget; but this wound we consider it a duty to keep open—this affliction we cherish and brood over in solitude. Where is the mother who would willingly forget the infant that perished like a blossom from her arms, though every recollection is a pang? Where is the child that would willingly forget the most ten-

der of parents, though to remember be but to lament? Who, even in the hour of agony, would forget the friend over whom he mourns? Who, even when the tomb is closing upon the remains of her he most loved; when he feels his heart, as it were, crushed in the closing of its portals; would accept of consolation that must be bought by forgetfulness?—No, the love which survives the tomb, is one of the noblest attributes of the soul.

If it has its woes, it has likewise its delights; and when the overwhelming burst of grief is calmed into the gentle tear of recollection; when the sudden anguish and the convulsive agony over the present ruins of all that we most loved, is softened away into pensive meditation on all that it was in the days of its loveliness—who would root out such a sorrow from the heart? Though it may sometimes throw a passing cloud over the bright hour of gaiety; or spread a deeper sadness over the hour of gloom; yet who would exchange it even for the song of pleasure, or the burst of revelry? No, there is a voice from the tomb sweeter than song. There is a remembrance of the dead to which we turn even from the charms of the living. Oh the grave!—the grave—it buries every error—covers every defect—extinguishes every resentment! From its peaceful bosom spring none but fond regrets and tender recollections. Who can look down upon the grave even of an enemy, and not feel a compunctious throb, that he should ever have warred with the poor handful of earth that lies mouldering before him!

But the grave of those we loved—what a place for meditation! There it is that we call up in long review the whole history of virtue and gentleness, and the thousand endearments lavished upon us almost unheeded in the daily intercourse of intimacy; there it is that we dwell upon the tenderness, the solemn, awful tenderness of the parting scene. The bed of death, with all its stifled griefs—its noiseless attendants, its mute, watchful assiduities. The last testimonies of expiring love! The feeble, fluttering, thrilling, oh! how thrilling!—pressure of the hand. The last fond look of the glazing eye, turning upon us even from the threshold of existence. The faint, faltering accents, struggling in death to give one more assurance of affection!

Ay, go to the grave of buried love, and meditate! There settle the account with thy conscience for every past benefit unrequited—every past endearment unregarded, of that departed being, who can never—never—never return to be soothed by thy contrition! If thou art a child, and hast ever added a sorrow to the soul, or a furrow to the silvered brow of an affectionate parent—if thou art a husband, and hast ever caused the fond bosom that ventured its whole happiness in thy arms, to doubt one moment of thy kindness or thy truth; if thou art a friend, and hast ever wronged, in thought, or word, or deed, the spirit that generously confided in thee,—if thou art a lover, and hast ever given one unmerited pang to that true heart which now lies cold and still beneath thy feet;—then be sure that every unkind look, every ungracious word, every ungentle action, will come thronging back upon thy memory, and knocking dolefully at thy soul—then be sure that thou wilt lie down sorrowing and repentant on the grave, and utter the unheard groan, and pour the unavailing tear—more deep, more bitter, because unheard and unavailing.

Then weave thy chaplet of flowers, and strew the beauties of nature about the grave; console thy broken spirit, if thou canst, with these tender, yet futile tributes of regret; —but take warning by the bitterness of this thy contrite affliction over the dead, and henceforth be more faithful and affectionate in the discharge of thy duties to the living.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

BISHOP WATSON'S ANSWER TO PAINE.

The "tale of the resurrection," you say, "follows that of the crucifixion."—You have accustomed me so much to this kind of language, that when I find you speaking of a tale, I have no doubt of meeting with a truth. From the apparent disagreement in the accounts, which the evangelists have given of some circumstances respecting the resurrection, you remark—"if the writers of these books had gone into any court of justice to prove an *alibi* (for it is the nature of an alibi that is here attempted to be proved, namely, the absence of a dead body by supernatural means) and

have given their evidence in the same contrary manner, as it is here given; they would have been in danger of having their ears cropt for perjury, and would have justly deserved it"—"hard words, or hanging," it seems, if you had been their judge. Now, I maintain, that it is the brevity with which the account of the resurrection is given by all the evangelists, which has occasioned the seeming confusion; and that this confusion would have been cleared up at once if the witnesses of the resurrection had been examined before any judicature. As we cannot have this *viva voce* examination of all the witnesses, let us call up and question the evangelists as witnesses to a supernatural alibi. Did you find the sepulchre of Jesus empty? One of us actually saw it empty, and the rest heard from eye witnesses, that it was empty. Did you, or any of the followers of Jesus, take away the dead body from the sepulchre? All answer, No.—Did the soldiers, or the Jews take away the body? No.—How are you certain of that? Because we saw the body when it was alive.—How do you know that what you saw was the body of Jesus? We have been long and intimately acquainted with Jesus, and know his person perfectly.—Were you not affrighted, and mistook a spirit for a body? No; the body had flesh and bones; we are sure that it was the very body which hung upon the cross, for we saw the wound in his side, and the print of the nails in the hands and feet.—And all this you are ready to swear? We are; and we are ready to die also, sooner than we will deny any part of it.—This is the testimony which all the evangelists would give, in whatever court of justice they were examined; and this I apprehend would sufficiently establish the alibi of the dead body from the sepulchre, by supernatural means.

But as the resurrection of Jesus is a point which you attack with all your force, I will examine minutely the principal of your objections; I do not think them deserving of this notice, but they shall have it. The book of Matthew, you say, "states that when Christ was put in the sepulchre, the Jews applied to Pilate for a watch or guard to be placed over the sepulchre, to prevent the body being stolen by the disciples."—I admit this account, but it is not the whole of the account; you have omitted the reason for the

request which the chief priests made to Pilate—"Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again."—It is material to remark this; for at the very time that Jesus predicted his resurrection, he predicted also his crucifixion, and all that he should suffer from the malice of those very men who now applied to Pilate for a guard.—"He showed to his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." (Matt. xvi. 21.)

These men knew full well that the first part of this prediction had been accurately fulfilled through their malignity; and, instead of repenting of what they had done, they were so infatuated as to suppose, that by a guard of soldiers they could prevent the completion of the second. The other books, you observe, "say nothing about this application, nor about the sealing of the stone, nor the guard, nor the watch, and according to these accounts there were none."—This, Sir, I deny. The other books do not say that there were none of these things; how often must I repeat, that omissions are not contradictions, nor silence concerning a fact, a denial of it?

You go on—"The book of Matthew continues its account that at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to *dawn*, towards the first day of the week, came *Mary Magdalene* and the other *Mary* to see the sepulchre. Mark says it was sun-rising, and John says it was dark. Luke says it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and *Mary the mother of James*, and *other women*, that came to the sepulchre. And John says that Mary Magdalene came alone. So well do they all agree about their first evidence! they all appear, however, to have known most about Mary Magdalene; she was a woman of a large acquaintance, and it was not an ill conjecture that she might be upon the stroll." This is a long paragraph; I will answer it distinctly:—first, there is no disagreement of evidence with respect to the time when the women went to the sepulchre: all the evangelists agree as to the day on which they went; and, as to the time of the day, it was early in the morning; what court of justice in the world would set aside this evidence, as insufficient to substantiate the fact of the women's having gone

to the sepulchre, because the witnesses differed as to the degree of twilight which lighted them on their way? Secondly, there is no disagreement of evidence, with respect to the persons who went to the sepulchre; John states that Mary Magdalene went to the sepulchre; but he does not state, *as you make him state*, that Mary Magdalene went alone; she might, for any thing you have proved, or can prove to the contrary, been accompanied by all the women mentioned by Luke:—is it an unusual thing to distinguish by name a principal person going on a visit, or an embassy, without mentioning his subordinate attendants? Thirdly, in opposition to your insinuation that Mary Magdalene was a common woman, I wish it to be considered, whether there is any scriptural authority for that imputation; and whether there be or not, I must contend that a repentant and reformed woman, ought not to be esteemed an improper witness of a fact. The conjecture which you adopt concerning her, is nothing less than an illiberal, indecent, unfounded calumny, not excusable in the mouth of a libertine, and intolerable in your's.

The book of Matthew, you observe, goes on to say—"and behold, there was an earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and *sat upon it*:—but the other books say nothing about an earthquake." What then? does their silence prove there was none? "nor about the angel rolling back the stone and sitting upon it." What then? does their silence prove that the stone was not rolled back by an angel, and that he did sit upon it?—"and according to their accounts there was no angel sitting there." This conclusion I must deny; their accounts do not say there was no angel sitting there, at the time that Matthew says he sat upon the stone. They do not deny the fact, they simply omit the mention of it, and they all take notice that the women, when they arrived at the sepulchre, found the stone rolled away: hence it is evident that the stone was rolled away *before* the women arrived at the sepulchre; and the other evangelists, giving an account of what happened to the women *when* they reached the sepulchre, have merely omitted giving an account of a transaction previous to their arrival. Where is the contradiction?

What space of time intervened between the rolling away the stone, and the arrival of the women at the sepulchre, is no where mentioned, but it was certainly long enough for the angel to have changed his position, from sitting on the outside he might have entered into the sepulchre; and another angel might have made his appearance, or, from the first there might have been two, one on the outside rolling away the stone, and the other within. Luke, you tell us, "says there were two, and they were both standing; and John says there were two and they were both sitting." It is impossible, I grant, even for an angel to be sitting and standing at the same instant of time; but Luke and John do not speak of the same instant, nor of the same appearance—Luke speaks of the appearance to all the women; and John of the appearance to Mary Magdalene alone, who tarried weeping at the sepulchre after Peter and John had left it. But I forbear making any more minute remarks on still minuter objections, all of which are grounded on this mistake—that the angels were seen at one particular time, in one particular place, and by the same individuals.

As to your inference, from Matthew's using the expression *unto this day*, "that the book must have been manufactured after a lapse of some generations at least," it cannot be admitted against the positive testimony of all antiquity. That the story about stealing away the body was a bungling story, I readily admit; but the chief priests are answerable for it; it is not worthy even your notice or mine, except as it is a strong instance to you, to me, and to every body, how far prejudice may mislead the understanding.

You come to that part of the evidence in those books that respects, you say, "the pretended appearance of Christ after his pretended resurrection; the writer of the book of Matthew relates, that the angel that was sitting on the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, said to the two Marys, (chap. xxviii. 7.)—"Behold, Christ is gone before you into Galilee, there shall you see him." The gospel, Sir, was preached to poor and illiterate men; and it is the duty of priests to preach it to them in all its purity; to guard them against the error of mistaken, or the designs of wicked men. You then, who can read your Bible, turn to this passage, and you will find that the angel did not say, "Be-

hold, Christ *is gone* before you into Galilee," but "Behold, *he goeth* before you into Galilee." I know not what Bible you made use of in this quotation; none that I have seen render the original word by—he is gone—it might be properly rendered, he will go; and it is literally rendered, he is going. This phrase does not imply an immediate setting out for Galilee: when a man has fixed upon a long journey, to London or Bath, it is common enough to say, he is going to London or Bath, though the time of his going may be at some distance. Even your dashing Matthew could not be guilty of such a blunder as to make the angel say *he is gone;* for he tells us immediately afterwards, that, as the women were departing from the sepulchre to tell his disciples what the angels had said to them, Jesus himself met them. Now how Jesus could be *gone* into Galilee, and yet meet the women at Jerusalem, I leave you to explain, for the blunder is not chargeable upon Matthew. I excuse your introducing the expression—"then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee," for the quotation is rightly made; but had you turned to the Greek Testament, you would not have found in this place, any word answering to *then;* the passage is better translated—and the eleven. Christ had said to his disciples—(Matt. xxvi. 32.) "After I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee:" and the angel put the woman in mind of the expression and prediction—*he is risen, as he said: and behold he goeth before you into Galilee.* Matthew, intent upon the appearance in Galilee, of which there were, probably, at the time he wrote, many living witnesses in Judea, omits the mention of many appearances taken notice of by John, and by this omission, seems to connect the day of the resurrection of Jesus, with that of the departure of the disciples for Galilee.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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